

from the bill, trimming back the total level of FY22 NDAA to no more than the amount requested by the President.

I want to thank my cosponsors, starting with Congresswoman JACOBS, who was so kind to manage this amendment on the floor yesterday, for her tremendous leadership. I also thank my co-chair of the Defense Spending Reduction Caucus, Mr. POCAN, as well as Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ for working together to bring this amendment to the floor. I also thank Chairman SMITH and Mr. MCGOVERN for their support in helping to make this very important amendment in order.

The President's budget request is one of the largest in American history. For years now, the United States has been peerless in its military spending, exceeding the total spending of the next 11 countries combined. We have numerous glaring examples of waste, fraud, and abuse within our defense establishment. Our 20-year experience in Afghanistan is a stark example where the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction identified billions of dollars—mind you, billions of dollars—wasted or outright stolen over our time there. The taxpayers deserve better.

Yet, Congress insists on piling more money into the Pentagon than our military leaders even ask for, despite DOD routinely returning unspent balances to the Treasury.

Enough is enough. Americans are demanding that Congress rebalance our priorities and invest in the biggest challenges America faces. We face imminent threats from the COVID pandemic, climate change, domestic terrorism, growing economic inequality, and systemic racial and ethnic inequities.

While I personally support a much larger reduction in Pentagon spending, we need to draw the line somewhere. This amendment is a good place to start. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, to send the message that Congress won't endorse constant inflation of the Pentagon budget.

Also, let me just cite amendment No. 40, offered again this year by Mr. POCAN and myself, for a 10 percent cut. I thank our colleague, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, for her bold leadership and for managing this amendment during the floor debate.

Mr. Speaker, the House stands again poised to pour three-quarters of a trillion dollars into a defense establishment that is unauditably, unaccountable, and does little to answer the biggest threats to the safety and welfare of our people.

The Pentagon is the only Federal department that has never passed an audit. I worked to get a requirement that DOD passes an audit written into permanent law a couple of years ago, with the help of Chairman SMITH and my colleague, Dr. BURGESS. Yet, still, the Pentagon says it won't be able to pass an audit for almost another decade.

It is not hard to find places to cut at the Pentagon. Earlier this year, a bi-

partisan group of organizations identified \$80 billion in savings that could be achieved just by implementing some efficiencies and eliminating obsolete weapons, weapons like Cold War-era bombs and missiles designed and built in the last century that are totally unsuited for the challenges of this century.

We see tremendous costs of this runaway spending, not only in the missing priorities, like public health, that are left unfunded, but in a way of thinking that militarizes every single problem in our society and turns peaceful protesters into targets for weapons of war.

Let me just say, this modest reduction that we are proposing, it won't compromise our national security, and it won't take a dollar from our troops. In fact, it will put more resources into enhancing the quality of life for our troops. It will also allow us to reinvest in healthcare, schools, and infrastructure.

This amendment will be a first step in rebalancing our priorities to build a safe, peaceful, prosperous world at home and abroad. I urge my colleagues to join me and to vote "yes" on this amendment. Let's start shifting our budget back to things that matter for most of our people.

AMERICANS FEEL BETRAYED BY BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, the American people are outraged, and they have every right to be. I am outraged with them.

All they have seen thus far in this administration is the buck being passed and both a President and his administration that refuse to uphold the basic tenets of leadership. This administration has ruined, mishandled, and dissembled every issue it has touched.

Americans are fearful that the country that they love and respect is being run into the ground at an alarming speed. Americans deserve answers, and our allies across the world deserve them as well.

Mr. Speaker, Americans feel betrayed. They feel that they have been betrayed by their own government. That feeling of betrayal was extremely palpable when Americans were stranded in Afghanistan because of an arbitrary deadline from the Taliban that this administration caved to.

In the following days, there were no answers, only speculation as to how many Americans were still left in Afghanistan who wanted to leave. Even now, as this administration grapples with how to respond to the Taliban's takeover, you would be hard-pressed to find real answers.

In a so-called classified briefing yesterday, Members got no concrete answers. It was a pitiful—I am saying "pitiful"—display of willful ignorance and incompetence.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at the past 8 months of the Biden administration, that incompetence is everywhere: the fall of Afghanistan, our open borders, skyrocketing inflation, reckless spending, record levels of unemployment and unfilled jobs, growing national security threats.

Refusing to respect the rule of law may be the worst, Mr. Speaker. These are just a few of the crises that have grown exponentially as the days go by.

Mr. Speaker, there is a common thread that you find in each of these circumstances, and it is that acceptance of the situation and accountability are virtually nonexistent.

Mr. Speaker, it is downright shameful that America has been taken down this rocky and unsettling path, and I fear we may never be able to fully recover. President Biden and his administration cannot simply sweep every new crisis under the rug and move on, but based on what has happened thus far, I suspect we will see more of the same.

The American people deserve better than abdicated leadership and a consistent failure to uphold our values.

DO BETTER FOR HAITI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, as the Member of Congress who represents the Virgin Islands, the only congressional office within the English-speaking Caribbean, the plight of my Haitian brothers and sisters is very close—not just the ones presently enduring egregious and unfair treatment at the U.S.-Mexico border, but our brothers and sisters in the nation of Haiti itself.

The crisis unfolding before our eyes at the border is woefully symbolic of our Nation's inconsistent and superficial response to the reoccurring calamities in Haiti specifically and the Caribbean generally.

The nation of Haiti faces a tremendous, ongoing crisis: the recent natural disasters, including a major earthquake, tropical storms, and hurricanes; the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; health insecurity; the assassination of a Prime Minister and the accompanying political instability; gang violence; along with large-scale deterioration of infrastructure; and poverty.

As we watch our fellow human beings seeking a better life, we need to ask ourselves: Do they deserve the dignity of listening to their story, understanding their desperation, and working to find sustainable, long-term solutions to the problems that cause tens of thousands of people to leave their country, live in abject and hostile poverty in South America, and make the dangerous trek to try to come to America?

I believe, and I think some of you do as well, that our Haitian neighbors deserve that, and that, in some ways, we owe them that, and that it is even in our own self-interests.